

THE ONTARIO
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ONTARIO HUMAN
RIGHTS CODE AND
PUBLIC
ACCOMMODATION

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PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION ••

Every place of public accommodation and summer recreation represents a major investment of time, labour and capital. In its operation, a proprietor is seeking to build a reputation for giving all customers the finest product and the best and most courteous service possible. His goal is to build a tradition of customer satisfaction that will maintain a present clientele and attract new patronage.

THE CODE PROVIDES ••

There are many things a proprietor or summer resort owner may do to enhance his business. There are also many aspects of operating a business which are controlled by law for the protection of the public. The Ontario Human Rights Code is a statute which aims to protect all the people of Ontario from discriminatory treatment on the basis of race, creed, colour, sex,* marital status, nationality, ancestry or place of origin in employment, public accommodation and housing.

Applied to places of public accommodation, this means that no one can be denied accommodation, services or facilities, or be discriminated against with regard to the quality of service, in any place to which the public is customarily admitted, because of his race, creed, colour, sex,* marital status, nationality, ancestry or place of origin. This provision of the Ontario Human Rights Code therefore applies to all public places — restaurants, hotels, summer resorts, beaches, swimming pools, theatres, bowling alleys, taverns, stores, barber shops, beauty parlors, and so on.

*The Code states: "[This] does not apply to prevent the barring of any person because of the sex of such person from any accommodation, services or facilities upon the ground of public decency."

CHOOSING YOUR GUESTS ••

Appropriate dress, good demeanour, financial responsibility and a proper use of facilities are some of the standards which an owner may set in selecting his current and prospective clientele. So long as such measures of acceptability are applied without regard to race, creed, colour or national origin, the establishment is in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Code does not compel any proprietor to accept any person who fails to meet reasonable and appropriate standards of guest selection. The insistence is that these standards must be applied uniformly to all persons seeking accommodation.



THE EFFECTS OF FAIR PRACTICES..

If proper standards are maintained, there need be no fear that non-discriminatory policies and practices will result in the loss of customers or will cause employee resistance.

Sometimes owners of establishments anticipate prejudice where it does not exist. In Ontario and in many jurisdictions with fair accommodation legislation, persons of different racial, religious and national groups have been working together and attending places of public accommodation and recreation for many years. As a result, Ontario residents and visitors have learned to judge and accept one another as individuals.



Experience has shown that in Ontario public opinion is strongly in support of human rights and fair practices. This support has been reflected in strong reactions from the press and from many organizations when instances of discrimination have come to light as well as in the fact that the legislation itself came into existence as a result of deputations from groups of citizens and agencies throughout the province, petitioning the government for human rights legislation. Experience has further shown that the fears of proprietors that business

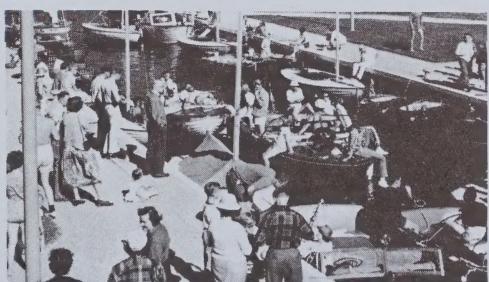
will be adversely affected when a policy of fair practices is adopted are groundless. In fact, in every complaint case that the Ontario Human Rights Commission has handled involving summer resorts and other places of public accommodation, all of which have been satisfactorily settled, the owner or proprietor has been invited to contact the Commission if he encounters any difficulties after changing his policy. In not one instance has the Commission received any report or indication that business has been hurt after the adoption of a fair practices policy to accommodate everyone.

VARIETY YIELDS DIVIDENDS..

To ensure the success of any enterprise, the essential elements are customers, old and new, who will express their appreciation of the service they have received by using facilities properly and paying their bills promptly year after year.

Many owners of public facilities are discovering that establishments gain by welcoming a "varied" clientele. Different people, representing different backgrounds, lend flavour and interest to attractive places. Such diversity often attracts many guests or patrons.

In addition, a varied clientele provides an improved economic base for the operation of any business, assuring the proprietor of an ever-widening circle of customers and acquaintances.



WHAT CAN YOU DO ?

There are a number of steps proprietors of places of public accommodation can take to ensure that the public is aware of their compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code and to further the cause of human rights throughout the province.

1

Post the Ontario Human Rights Code Card prominently on your premises. The Card indicates that the establishment is being operated in accord with the provisions of the Code and that all persons are welcome, regardless of their race, colour, religion or nationality. Many resort owners and hotel proprietors have placed cards in all of their rooms or cabins.

2

In advertising and in descriptive brochures, include a statement to the effect that the establishment is being operated in accord with the Ontario Human Rights Code and that all persons are welcome, regardless of race, colour, religion or nationality.

3

Make sure that all of your employees are familiar with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code and that they know it is your policy to comply with the Code and to assure equal treatment to all seeking accommodation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ..

Copies of the Ontario Human Rights Code and publications describing the role of the Ontario Human Rights Commission in administering the Code and handling complaints are available. The Commission is ready at any time to answer particular questions or discuss problems which summer resort owners or proprietors of places of public accommodation may wish to raise. For this information, write to one of the addresses on the next page.